

ALL IN COLOUR - MAKES LEARNING A JOY

Once Upon a Time

EVERY WEDNESDAY

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PRICE 1/6



Thumbelina



1. In the underground passage between the field-mouse's home and the mole's, Thumbelina had found a bird, lying stiff and cold. The mole told her that it had died at the beginning of the Winter. Thumbelina felt sorry for the poor bird and covered it gently with hay. The bird was not dead and as it grew warm, it revived.



2. The bird told Thumbelina that it had torn its wing on a bramble and it could not join all the other swallows when they flew off to warmer countries at the beginning of Winter. As the weeks passed, Thumbelina grew very fond of the bird and often crept down to the passage, so that she could sit and talk to it and keep it happy.



3. When Spring came and the weather grew warmer, the bird told Thumbelina that all the other swallows would be returning, so Thumbelina made a hole in the roof so that it could fly away. "Come with me. This underground home is no place for you," said the bird. But Thumbelina said she could not leave the field-mouse all alone.



4. The mole came to visit them more and more often and at last he told the field-mouse that he wished to make Thumbelina his bride. She wept when she heard this, for she did not want to live underground and never see the sunshine, but the field-mouse only laughed. "You must start making your wedding clothes," he said.



5. The field-mouse would hear no objections. "The mole is rich and he has a fine house. You should be glad he wants to marry you," he said. At the end of the Summer the field-mouse told Thumbelina that the mole was coming to fetch her. Sadly she crept outside to say farewell to the sun. At that moment she heard a chirping.



6. There was the swallow, passing by with the other swallows. It flew down to talk to her. Thumbelina told the bird how she hated going to live with the mole deep down in the earth, and the bird replied: "Come with me. I am flying to a warm country to spend the Winter." Thumbelina climbed on to its back and they flew away.



7. Far away they flew, over many miles of ocean, until at last they reached a land where the sun shone and the flowers bloomed. They came to the ruins of an ancient temple, which was covered with flowers. The swallow set Thumbelina down on one of the flowers. To her surprise she saw tiny people and a tiny man with a crown.



8. He told Thumbelina that he was a king and his people were the guardians of the flowers. Then he asked Thumbelina to marry him. All the little people brought them presents, but the best one was a pair of wings, which were put on Thumbelina's back and then she, too, could fly among the flowers, with the others.



SPRUCE

There are many kinds of pine or fir trees in Great Britain and the proper name for them is conifers, because they produce cones containing their seeds. The tree above is a Spruce. This tall tree is grown both for its valuable timber and also as a decoration in an open space. We can easily recognise the young Spruce trees, because, when small, they are the familiar Christmas trees we have in our homes. At the top are shown the male flowers. Underneath are the female flowers. These will produce the seed-cone shown below them. These graceful cones, which hang downwards, change colour from green to purple and then to brown as they ripen.



LARCH

Two kinds of Larch tree, the European and the Japanese, grow well in Great Britain, so look out for them when you are next in the countryside. Larch trees cannot be confused with other conifers because they shed their leaves, or needles, in Winter. When the Spring comes they grow new leaves and are a beautiful soft golden-greenish colour. This changes to dark green later on in the year. In the picture you can see the cones on the Larch branches when they are new and tightly-packed. Alongside them is an older cone, which is more open in shape. Larch trees are fast-growing and their tall, slender trunks are often used for making poles and masts.

All Sorts of



Pine and Fir Trees

SCOTS PINE

The lovely Scots Pine is a true native of Britain, which means that it was not brought in from another country. Sometimes it is wrongly given the name of Scots Fir. You can see this tree in many parts of England and Scotland, on hills and lowlands alike, and it is easily recognised by its long, rather bare trunk and wide flat top, like a giant umbrella. It will grow in almost any kind of soil. The bark of the trunk is tinged with red and the timber of the Scots Pine is very valuable. It is much used for making furniture and in the building trade. The flowers and the newly-formed cones are shown above, together with an old cone, splitting open to release its seeds.

MARITIME PINE

This is a tree which first came to Great Britain from the warmer countries in the Mediterranean Sea area. At a quick glance the Maritime Pine looks somewhat like the Scots Pine, but it has a reddish-grey trunk, with many branches sticking out from it near the bottom. The umbrella-shaped top may confuse you for a moment or two, but if you compare it with the picture of the Scots Pine you are not likely to make a mistake. The branches which carry the cones are similar, as you will see. The cones of the Maritime Pine may be as much as seven inches long. Its timber is not of great value, because it is not very straight and is usually full of tough knots.





BREER RABBIT

Fishing for Ducks

NOW, in case you don't know, it happens at a certain time of the year in the part of the country where Brer Rabbit lives that there is a great sound of honking and quacking and squawking in the sky. And the folks, they all look up and say:

"Here they come again—the wild ducks and geese. Just look how they fly!"

Of course, you can well imagine that some of the biggest and greediest folks like Brer Fox, Brer Wolf and Brer Bear would be only too pleased to get hold of some of those geese and ducks for themselves. But the wild geese were too smart to come down and get caught. They just kept flying across the sky in their arrow-head formation and honked and honked as they passed by.

The ducks, however, did come down to

the ponds and pools for a rest and they quacked and quacked among themselves as they gobbled up the tasty weeds and a few little frogs as well.

One day, when this happened, Brer Rabbit got out his fishing-pole and tied a lump of bread on the end of it.

"Where are you going, Brer Rabbit?" asked Mrs. Brer Rabbit.

"I'm off to go fishing for ducks, my dear," he replied.

When news of this got around, there was much laughing and giggling among all the other folks.

"Fishing for ducks indeed!" they laughed. "Whoever heard of such a thing?"

Well, Brer Rabbit just said nothing and away he went with his fishing pole to a field where there was a big pond.

And as he got near, he heard a lot of

quacking and splashing and puffing and blowing. Kneeling on the edge of the pond was old Brer Wolf, trying to catch a duck by hitting it with a big stick.

"Howdy, Brer Wolf," said Brer Rabbit. "It's a lovely day for duck-hunting."

"Howdy, Brer Rabbit," answered Brer Wolf. "It's a lovely day indeed. But don't you come too near—these ducks are all mine. I saw them first, so you can just keep right away, Mister artful Brer Rabbit."

"Sure, sure!" Brer Rabbit replied. "But tell me, my old friend, how many ducks have you caught up to now?"

"Oh, I've only just started," said Brer Wolf, which was a bit of a fib because he had been there for at least two hours. "I'm just getting my aim right."

Quack—splash—puff! He swung the stick but away flew the duck he was aim-

ing at and all he hit was the water.

"Ah, I can see you're not missing by much, Brer Wolf," nodded Brer Rabbit. "Keep at it."

"I certainly will," panted Brer Wolf, as he whacked the water once again and only sent up splashes. "Where are you going with that fishing-pole?"

Brer Rabbit gave it a waggle that sent the bit of bread jiggling up and down. "Oh," he said, "I'm off fishing for ducks!"

Brer Wolf almost fell over with laughing. "You can't catch ducks like that," he jeered. "You're just being silly."

"Maybe so," said Brer Rabbit with a sly grin. "Well, so-long for now, Brer Wolf, and don't splash yourself too much."

He left Brer Wolf still trying to hit one of the ducks with his big stick, and marched on his way to the next big pond.

Here the wild ducks were dabbling in the water with their beaks and Brer Rabbit did not frighten them. With his fishing-pole on his shoulder like a gun he began to march up and down.

"Left-right—quack-quack!" he said.

At first the ducks took little notice.

"Left-right—quack-quack!" said Brer Rabbit, still marching round the pond like a soldier on parade.

He did this for about half an hour and at last his patience was rewarded. One of the ducks, which had been watching him very curiously for the past few minutes, waddled out of the pond and joined up behind Brer Rabbit and the dangling bit of bread on the fishing-pole.

"Quack-quack!" it went.

"Left-right!" went Brer Rabbit.

Twice round the pond they marched with the duck keeping in step with Brer Rabbit, and then another duck came waddling out to join them.

"Quack-quack!" went duck number one.

"Quack-quack!" went duck number two.

"Left-right—quack-quack!" went artful Brer Rabbit.

He knew well enough that ducks liked to walk one behind the other and he was not a bit surprised when a third duck joined in the marching game.

With a "quack-quack-quack" and a "left-right-left" they merrily marched on and when all the ducks from the pond were in line behind him, Brer Rabbit changed direction towards the road.

The ducks did not seem to notice, for they were happily keeping in step. But somebody noticed, and that somebody was, of course, Brer Wolf!

They passed him, tired out, disappointed, bad-tempered and fed-up. All Brer Wolf had got for his efforts with the big stick were a headache, a pair of sore arms, and a good soaking.

"Howdy, Brer Wolf," said Brer Rabbit, as they passed by. "Did you have any luck with the ducks today?"

Brer Wolf could only gasp and splutter in reply. "Grrr!" he growled.

"Would you like to march with us back home?" asked Brer Rabbit.

"Grrr!" growled Brer Wolf again.

So Brer Rabbit marched his little army of ducks through the town, and very smart they looked, too.

When he got home Mrs. Brer Rabbit was highly delighted. "My, my, my!" she

said. "You were really speaking the truth when you said you were going fishing for ducks."

Later on, after the ducks had become tame, clever Brer Rabbit exchanged them with Mr. Farmer for a great big sackful of best juicy carrots.

Another Brer Rabbit story next week.

BRER RABBIT'S RIDDLES


1. Why is the figure 9 like a peacock?
2. When is a coin like climbing a high mountain?
3. How could a ladybird change its spots?
4. Which blade never needs sharpening?

ANSWERS:


1. Because without its tail it is nothing.
2. When it's a cent (ascent).
3. By moving from one bush to another.
4. A blade of grass.



BREAD



Most bread is made from wheat flour. The biggest growers of wheat are the larger countries, such as Canada, the United States and Australia. The farmer is looking at the wheat crop to judge the moment when the grains are ripe and ready to be collected by the combine-harvester.



After the wheat-grains have been ground into fine flour, the bakers turn it into a soft dough. Yeast is added to make the dough rise and the loaves are baked in an oven. White bread is made from grains of wheat which have had the outside husks removed. Wholemeal flour, which includes the husk, is used for making brown bread.



The Water Vole



1. This little animal is often wrongly called a Water Rat, but it is not a rat at all. It is a Water Vole. It has a round, thick head, a rounded muzzle and small, round ears. Its warm, thick, silky fur is reddish-brown or grey in colour.



2. In the river bank, where it lives, the Water Vole tunnels itself a rambling burrow. This makes it very unpopular for the burrows often undermine the river bank. The burrow has an entrance under the water and another entrance on the bank itself.



3. The Water Vole is shy and timid and when it is disturbed it dives into the water with a plop! It either retreats into its burrow or swims away up the river. It is most active at night, but it also comes out in the daytime to feed.



4. It likes to have a meal every few hours and finds reeds and water plants to eat. Its tiny little eyes are very shortsighted, but its hearing is very keen and at the slightest sound, or sudden movement, it takes fright and dives under the water.



5. Although it loves swimming, the Water Vole hates rain and it stays inside its burrow. In Spring, the female makes a round nest of reeds and grasses, in a hole under the bank and here the baby voles, which are naked and blind, are born.



6. The Water Vole does not sleep all through the Winter, but it often does collect little stores of food, nuts and plant stems, for Winter, when food is hard to get. It can swim in the river, even in cold weather, because its fur coat keeps it warm.

This is a Memory Test. When you have read the story, turn to page 19 and try to answer the questions about it.

Trooping The Colour

If you visit London you will probably go to see Buckingham Palace. This beautiful house is the home of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh and their four children when they are in London and it has been the London home of the Royal Families since 1837.

There is always plenty to see in London at all times of the year, but if you happen to be there at the beginning of June, you may be lucky enough to see one of the largest pageants in the world taking place. This famous ceremony is called Trooping the Colour, and it is carried out on the occasion of the Queen's Official Birthday.

The Queen's guards gather in the courtyard of the Horse Guards building in Whitehall. It is from here that one can see the ceremony of The Changing of the Guard which takes place every day, and is another great tourist attraction.

Wearing the uniform of the Regiment of Guards whose colour (this is the correct name for a regimental flag) is being shown, the Queen watches the march-past of the Guards, who always look so smart and well-drilled.

As you can see in the picture, many people gather to watch the splendid scene of Trooping the Colour. The Queen takes the salute, on horseback.

The guards who take part in this wonderful ceremony are the Brigade of Guards and the Household Cavalry.



DO YOU NEED SOME COPIES OF "ONCE UPON A TIME" ?

If you are collecting weekly copies and would like any back numbers, the address to write to is: City Magazines, Aldwych House, 81, Aldwych, London, W.C.1. The cost is 1/8d. each, including postage.



Jack Frost and the Witch's Spell



1. The Snow Queen and the Fire King were enemies. For years there had been a feud between them, but neither had been able to defeat the other. Then, one day, the Fire King and his warriors crept secretly up to the Snow Queen's castle and began to attack it. They shot showers of flaming arrows over the battlements. The guards saw that their long lances of ice were starting to melt.



2. They rushed at once to the royal apartments, to tell the Snow Queen of the attack. "The Fire King is here, Your Majesty," they cried. The Snow Queen leapt to her feet. "To the battlements," she ordered. "We must cool these hot-heads who dare to come to attack our castle, and teach the Fire King a lesson." Her son, handsome Jack Frost, went with the guards to fight too.



3. When Jack Frost reached the battlements the flaming arrows were falling thick and fast, all round, but they were quickly put out by the ice and snow. Then the castle guards began to fight back, hurling huge cannonballs of snow down on to the attacking army below, from the battlements of the castle.



4. The Fire King's army was sent back. The soldiers fled in disorder to hide in the forest. The Fire King fled, too, his crown of flames almost put out by the snowballs. Only a few arrows, hissing and steaming in the snow, showed that there had been an attack. Jack Frost sat thinking sadly about the constant fighting.



5. Jack wished he could find a way to end the quarrel between the Fire King and his mother, the Snow Queen, so several days later he set off to seek the help of Wanda, the wise old witch who lived in the forest. When Wanda heard Jack Frost's problem, she smiled in a knowing kind of way. "That is a simple problem," she said, looking at her book of spells quickly.



6. The witch brewed up a special magic potion. When it was ready she poured the magic potion into a goblet and persuaded Jack Frost to drink it. "Now, under the power of this magic potion, you can go to the Fire King's castle," she said. "Go on, get along with you." The witch's magic had made Jack feel quite brave and he set off for the castle. It was a long walk.



7. Jack had no idea what he was going to do when he got there, but just as he approached the castle gates, who should appear but the Fire King's beautiful daughter, Princess Flame. As soon as Jack saw her, he fell head over heels in love with her. The princess thought Jack the handsomest man she had ever seen.



8. Jack Frost and Princess Flame told their parents, the Snow Queen and the Fire King, that they wanted to get married. Their parents were forced to consent and finally the wedding was arranged. Thanks to Wanda's magic, the feud ended and the two rulers and their people lived in peace and happiness ever after.



BEAUTIFUL PICTURES

What could be prettier than this delightful colour photograph of red and pink roses and a charming kitten? If you cut it out and

pasted it neatly on cardboard you could hang it in your bedroom, where it would be a bright thing to look at in the morning

Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovakia (say it chek-o-slo-vaki-a) is about 600 miles long and 200 miles wide and is sandwiched between Poland and Hungary. Its position in the continent of Europe is shown on the small map on the right. For nearly a thousand years this part of Europe (once known as Bohemia) has been famous for making glassware. This trade is still carried on and glassware is exported to many parts of the world, now marked "Made in Czechoslovakia". Other well-known exports are articles made of leather, such as shoes.



Czechoslovakian Girl
in National Dress

Above you will see the Czech flag. To get to know more about the towns and cities of Czechoslovakia take a trip from Prague, the capital, to Pilsen, Brunn, Bratislava, Koske, Ostrava and back again to Prague. But be careful not to cross a line of the maze.



The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse

This week . . . Winifred holds a meeting.

WINIFRED was a country mouse. She lived in a little cottage in a small village. All day long Winifred was a very busy little mouse, washing and cleaning and baking, for it was not like living in a town, where she could pop around the corner to the cake-shop and buy a cake if visitors dropped in. Winifred did most of her baking herself.

One day, Winifred looked in the pantry and discovered that she was very short of flour to make her special buns. "Oh dear, that will never do," she squeaked to herself. "I must go to the shop at once and buy some flour."

So Winifred put on her hat and coat, took her basket and off she went to the village Post Office. You may think a Post Office is a funny place to buy flour and butter and sugar, but this village Post Office sold almost everything else the villagers needed, besides stamps.

If it hadn't sold all kinds of things, Winifred would not have met Mrs. Smythe there. Mrs. Smythe was at the opposite counter to Winifred, buying stamps, and the postman, who had just taken all the letters which were to be delivered, had handed her a letter addressed to her.

"Oh dear," said Mrs. Smythe, as she read her letter. "What a shame." Then she saw Winifred.

"Listen to this, Winifred," she said. "The Home for Orphan Mice is in great need of money. Matron has written to me, saying that if they do not get some more money, they will not be able to take any more orphan mice. In fact, they will find it very hard to support the orphans they have."

"We must do something," squeaked Winifred, who often had some of the orphan mice to her cottage to tea. "I'm sure the other ladies of the village would feel the same. Perhaps we should call a meeting of the Lady Mice's Guild. I would

be quite happy for them to meet at my cottage, if you like."

Mrs. Smythe thought that was a fine idea. "Your house is the easiest one for all the other mice to get to, so it is much the best place to meet, quite apart from the delicious cakes you always make," she said.

Winifred went quite pink behind the ears with pleasure and hurried off home with her shopping basket full, to start baking, while Mrs. Smythe went home to write little notes to all the mice in the Ladies' Guild, asking them to come to Winifred's cottage.

Winifred scrubbed and cleaned and baked even harder than ever, so that everything was clean and shining when all the mice arrived.

At four o'clock the other mice arrived and settled down to tea and cakes and a chat and told Winifred how wonderful her cakes were and asked for the recipes.

Then Mrs. Smythe stood up, and said in her most important voice, "Ladies, we have all met at Winifred's cottage to see if we can do something to help the poor Orphan Mice's Home, which is very short of money."

"We could have a Jumble Sale," ventured one mouse.

"I'm afraid there have been three Jumble Sales in the past six weeks," Mrs. Smythe replied. "It's got to the point now where we're all buying back our own jumble. No, I'm afraid we'll never get enough money that way."

Then Winifred had a bright idea. "What about a fete," she murmured timidly. "It's been such a long time since we had a fete, lots of people would come."

Mrs. Smythe smiled and all the ladies nodded their heads. "What a good idea," they twittered. So it was agreed that they should have a village fete in aid of the Orphan Mice.

Of course, they then had to arrange who should run the stalls. Everybody agreed at once that Winifred should run the cake stall, and make a special cake for people to guess its weight.

Mrs. Smythe offered to run the White Elephant stall, another mouse offered to serve refreshments and so it went on, until everyone had a job to do. It was decided that Lady Mirabelle Mouse, who lived in a big country house not far away, should be asked to open the fete.

For days everyone was busy, collecting things to be sold, setting up stalls on the village green, and so on.

Then just when it seemed that everything was ready a letter arrived from Lady Mirabelle. "Whatever shall we do?" asked Mrs. Smythe, when she met Winifred in the village. "Lady Mirabelle has the measles and she can't possibly come and open the fete for us."

"Oh dear," sighed Winifred. "Just when everything was going so well."

Then Winifred had another of her bright ideas. "Well, I have a cousin," she said. "A very smart mouse. She lives in a big house in town and she is very pretty. Shall I ask her to come and open our fete for us?"


Mrs. Smythe looked at Winifred. "Do you really think she would?" she asked.

"I'll write and ask her tonight," said Winifred.

That night, Winifred wrote a letter to Stephanie, telling her all about the fete and the orphan mice and how pleased everyone would be if she came and opened the fete for them. Then she put the letter in an envelope and went off to the postbox, hoping as hard as she could that Stephanie could come.

See what happens in the next part of this delightful tale.



A full-page illustration on the left side of the page depicts a scene from the legend of King Arthur. In the foreground, King Arthur, wearing a red tunic and a silver helmet, stands on a grassy path, holding a sword and a shield. He is looking up at a knight in full plate armor who is mounted on a dark horse. The knight, wearing a green surcoat, is holding a long sword aloft. The background shows a lush green forest with trees and a path leading into the distance.

King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table

ONCE upon a time, when King Arthur was King of England, a wounded knight rode into the courtyard of the Castle at Camelot.

Now this knight was one of King Arthur's bravest and most loyal knights, and the king was gravely concerned.

He questioned Griflet, the wounded knight's squire (or servant).

"Who dealt these wounds upon your master?" asked King Arthur.

And Griflet told him:

"'Twas a strange knight, my lord king," he said. "His armour was of a rare greenish colour. He had made his camp at the end of the valley, and he denied us the right to pass through."

King Arthur frowned.

"So your noble master battled with this stranger . . . and was defeated?"

"Yes, my lord king," answered Griflet.

"This wounds my pride, and angers me not a little," said the king. "Your master was one of my most skilled and valiant knights, and a good friend."

"But the Green Knight has killed or wounded all who have tried to pass him, my lord king," said Griflet. "No one can defeat the Green Knight!"

King Arthur thought hard about this. He could have sent another of his knights to deal with the Green Knight, but the young king felt that it was up to him to do it.

King Arthur was unafraid. So, early the next morning, he put on his armour, buckled on his sword, and rode out alone to meet the powerful foe.

The reason he left his castle in secret was because he knew there was one person in particular who would have stopped him risking his life.

That was old Merlin, the wizard . . . the kindly man of magic who had helped Arthur Pendragon take his rightful place upon the throne of England.

So, unseen, King Arthur rode forth to do battle with the Green Knight.

Arthur came upon his powerful foe as he was about to ride into the valley.

The Green Knight had already mounted his big black horse. He held his long spear ready for action.

"Take heed of my words, stranger," cried the Green Knight. "Seek you another way, or you will regret it! No one enters the valley while I am camped here!"

King Arthur slowly lowered his spear until its gleaming head pointed straight at the Green Knight, who sat on his horse some twenty yards away.

"Take heed of my words, stranger," replied King Arthur, grimly. "I am coming through the valley . . . now!"

Then he spurred his horse forward. The Green Knight did the same, and the two armour-clad figures thundered towards one another at full gallop!

The valley echoed to the clash of steel as the two spears struck home. Such was the terrific force of the blows that the spears broke, and both the King and his savage enemy were flung off their horses.

Dazed and bruised, they rose from the ground. Then swords were drawn, and there began a fight such as few people have ever seen.

The Green Knight was not only tall, but he was so strong that some of the mighty blows he dealt with his sword sent King Arthur crashing to the ground.

It was only the speed and nimbleness of the young king that saved his life many times. Again and again he struggled to his feet and bravely renewed the fierce battle.

Both men suffered many wounds, until at last both lay where they had been struck down by the other's blow.

It was then that Merlin found them.

Despite King Arthur's secrecy, the old wizard had used his gift of magic to find out why King Arthur had left Camelot alone so early in the morning, and had ridden out to find him.

The evil Green Knight was past human aid. Arthur was alive, but so seriously wounded that even old Merlin feared for his life.

But Merlin managed to drag the King to a nearby cave in which a strange old hermit lived.

This hermit knew of many wonderful herbs and other things for healing wounds, and, after a few weeks, King Arthur was well again.

"Once again I owe you my life, my faithful old friend," said King Arthur as he rode away from the hermit's cave with Merlin by his side.

The old wizard said nothing. He seemed to be having some difficulty choosing which of several trails to take.

At length he was satisfied that they were travelling in the right direction. Then King Arthur remembered something.

"I am without a sword, my friend," he said. "That rogue knight broke mine with his last blow."

He looked about him, frowning as he added: "And methinks I should feel safer armed in this strange part of our land!"

Merlin had led them deep into a part where King Arthur had never been before . . . a place where no man, bird or beast were to be seen.

A white mist hung silently above a vast lake, and the young king looked puzzled as he glanced at old Merlin.

"What place is this, Merlin?" he asked. "Did you not hear what I said just now? I am without a sword!"

"'Tis for that very reason that I bring thee here, my lord king," answered the strange old wizard. "Look yonder."

Merlin pointed. And there—rising up out of the waters of the lake—Arthur saw a hand holding a mighty sword!

Then, a rowing-boat slid silently from out of a big clump of rushes close by, and King Arthur beheld a beautiful young lady.

"This is the Lady of the Lake," said old Merlin to the king. "She has a message for you. Hark you well to her words."

King Arthur was too surprised to say anything. The Lady of the Lake spoke to him.

"Greeting, O King," she said. "The sword you see yonder is mine. You are without a sword, so, row yourself in this boat to the hand and take from it the sword. It is named Excalibur, and while you keep the scabbard by your side, you shall lose no blood no matter how wounded you may be!"

King Arthur knew that he must do as the Lady of the Lake said. And so he rowed out to where the hand held the sword above the waters of the lake, and he took it.

When he rowed back with it to where Merlin stood, the Lady of the Lake had vanished!

It was a strange adventure . . . almost like a dream, thought King Arthur. But the sword Excalibur was to serve him well in many great battles.

More about brave King Arthur and his Knights next week.

Here are the questions about the story "Trooping the Colour" on page 10. See how many you can answer before turning back to check.

1. What is the name of the London home of the Queen?
2. When does the Trooping the Colour ceremony take place?
3. Where can you go to see it?
4. What is the correct name for "colour"?





The WISE OLD OWL

Knows all the answers

Here is the Wise Old Owl to answer some questions which you have asked.



1. What were centaurs and where did they live?

"Centaurs were supposed to be a race of wild creatures, half horse and half man. They had the body and legs of a horse and the upper half of a man, with arms and a strong, bearded face. They did not really exist, but in the famous Greek story of Jason and the Golden Fleece, the teacher of Jason when he was young was said to be a Centaur named Chiron. It is possible that when the Ancient Greeks first saw a man on horseback they believed that it was only one animal."



2. Is a narwhal a kind of whale?

"This strange sea creature belongs to a family which is called cetacea, which includes whales, dolphins and porpoises . . . all animals which have adapted themselves to living in the sea. The narwhal has a long, spiral-shaped tusk about eight feet long."



3. How many webs can a spider spin?

"There is no limit to the number, because the fine thread which the spider spins into a web is made inside its body. The purpose of the web is to trap insects on which the spider feeds. If the web becomes damaged by wind or rain, the spider spins another."



4. What sort of animal is a coati-mundi?

"It is a South American animal which lives mainly in trees and feeds on lizards, young birds, eggs, insects and fruit."



5. How does a bee making a humming noise?

"The loud hum is made when a bee flies. Its wings move very, very quickly and set the air moving, which makes the humming sound."